



MEMORANDUM

TO: City Council

FROM: Brian Pedrotti, Director of Community Development

BY: Andrew Perez, Planning Manager

SUBJECT: General Plan Update Progress Report – September 2024

DATE: September 24, 2024

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive an update on the status of the Comprehensive General Plan Update project.

IMPACT ON FINANCIAL AND PERSONNEL RESOURCES:

The financial and personnel impacts associated with this project are included in the budget for the Comprehensive General Plan Update.

BACKGROUND:

On [March 28, 2023](https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=5977)¹, the City Council approved a consultant services agreement with Mintier Harnish to assist City staff with the Comprehensive General Plan Update. In addition to a comprehensive update of the existing General Plan Elements, the project's scope includes creating an Environmental Justice Element, an evaluation of development standards, an East Grand Avenue Corridor Overlay District, creation of objective design standards, a Development Code update, retail market analysis, market demand study, and update to the City's Climate Action Plan. An environmental impact report (EIR) will be prepared to analyze the significant environmental effects of the update and discuss options to mitigate or avoid those effects.

The project scope is divided among eleven (11) phases, the first four of which are complete:

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|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Project Initiation | 7. Environmental Impact Report |
| 2. Public Outreach Strategy | 8. Public Review & Adoption |
| 3. Background Data & Analysis | 9. Technical Development Code Update |
| 4. Visioning & Guiding Principles | 10. Economic Tasks & Analysis |
| 5. Alternative Choices | 11. Climate Action Plan |
| 6. General Plan | |

¹ <https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=5977>

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Project initiation consisted of a kick-off meeting with city staff and a subsequent study session with City Council, which was held on [August 22, 2023](https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=8165)², to refine the scope of work and project schedule. Development of the [project website](https://planarroyogrande.com/)³, logo and branding, creation of an email list were part of the Public Outreach Strategy phase. The [Community Engagement Summary Report](https://planarroyogrande.com/images/images/AGGPU_Fall2023CommunityOutreachSummary_PRD_reduced_2024%2001%2025%20NZ.pdf)⁴ describes the outreach efforts that took place during the initial phases of the project and strategies to engage the community and transmit information to the public throughout the process. Although this phase is noted as being completed, it continues to evolve as staff and the consultant pursue additional ideas and concepts to encourage community input and involvement.

The Background Data and Analysis phase focused on the identifying existing trends in land use, population, employment, housing, circulation, economics, and environmental resources. The first community workshop was held on October 5, 2023, with the purpose of hearing the community's opinions about the city's major assets, issues, and opportunity areas. Information gathered during this phase informed the [Existing Conditions and Trends Workbook](https://planarroyogrande.com/images/images/AGGPU_ECTW_Final%20Draft_Reduced_2024%2002%2021%20MG.pdf)⁵, which was published in February 2024.

Using data and information obtained from the first workshop and Existing Conditions Workbook, staff transitioned to developing a vision statement and guiding principles for the project. A second workshop was held on February 28, 2024, to obtain information about the community's vision for the future. A series of exercises was provided to further identify the places in the City that offer opportunities for improvement and enhancements and describe the participants' ideal vision for the future. Comments gathered from the workshop and the associated online survey were compiled and analyzed to create draft vision statements and guiding principles to be reviewed and refined by Planning Commission on [July 2, 2024](https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=11552)⁶. Those recommendations were presented to Council on [August 13, 2024](https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=12015)⁷, when the final vision statement and guiding principles were adopted.

A seven-member General Plan Citizen Advisory Group (GPCAG) has also been formed, consisting of residents from a wide range of professional backgrounds. The GPCAG will meet approximately one time per month to review administrative drafts of deliverables and be consulted during initial policy development.

² <https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=8165>

³ <https://planarroyogrande.com/>

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https://planarroyogrande.com/images/images/AGGPU_Fall2023CommunityOutreachSummary_PRD_reduced_2024%2001%2025%20NZ.pdf

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https://planarroyogrande.com/images/images/AGGPU_ECTW_Final%20Draft_Reduced_2024%2002%2021%20MG.pdf

⁶ <https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=11552>

⁷ <https://pub-arroyogrande.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=12015>

ANALYSIS OF ISSUES:

This is the first version of what is anticipated to be regular updates to the Council from Community Development Department staff regarding the comprehensive General Plan Update project. The next phase of the project will be evaluating and developing land use alternatives for future development. This phase will rely heavily on input from the community and decision makers to identify development scenarios. Phase 5 will consist of at least one community workshop, an online survey and mapping exercise, and pop-up events at local venues and events, and is anticipated to go through the end of 2024 and into early 2025.

Decision-makers will weigh the costs and benefits of each alternative presented in this report and select a preferred land use alternative. The preferred land use alternative may be one of the alternatives or a combination of features from each alternative. The preferred land use alternative, along with community input and the City’s Vision Statement and Guiding Principles (prepared during Phase 4), will then guide the preparation of General Plan goals, policies, and implementation programs. Per the schedule, the main portion of the project (Comprehensive General Plan Update) will continue until mid-2025, with the Environmental Impact Report effort from spring 2025 through spring 2026, and the Comprehensive Development Code Update beginning in spring of 2025 extending to fall/winter 2026. Staff will continue to monitor the schedule to ensure that the timeline of the project components are maintained.

ALTERNATIVES:

The following alternatives are provided for the Council’s consideration:

1. Receive an update on the progress of the Comprehensive General Plan Update;
or
2. Provide other direction to staff.

ADVANTAGES:

Regular updates to the City Council will inform decision makers and the community on the status of the project.

DISADVANTAGES:

None identified.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW:

No environmental review is required for this General Plan Update. An EIR will be necessary to evaluate the potential impacts of the update and has been included in the scope of work.

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION AND COMMENTS:

The Agenda was posted at City Hall and on the City’s website in accordance with Government Code Section 54954.2.